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SUBJECT: SOMALIA--TALKING POINTS FOR MAY 12 BRIEFING BY
U/SYG HOLMES

¶1. USUN is instructed to draw from the following talking points for the May 12 UN Security Council briefing on Somalia by Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordination Sir John Holmes. Begin points:

-- We would like to thank U/SYG Holmes for his informative briefing on the humanitarian crisis in Somalia.

-- The United States remains gravely concerned about the humanitarian situation in Somalia, especially in south-central Somalia. There are 1.5 million people in need of assistance in Somalia. More than 60 percent of the population of Mogadishu have left the city with some areas being completely vacated. Over 300,000 Somalis have sought refuge in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Yemen. Delivery of humanitarian assistance has been hampered by insecurity, roadblocks, and interference from the TFG, extremists, and clan rivalries. The insecurity coupled with worsening drought conditions make Somalia one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today.

-- In FY 2007, the United States Government provided approximately \$7.1 million in earmarked funds to address the needs of Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. We also provided \$4.8 million for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) operations in Somalia. In this fiscal year, we have received \$10 million in emergency funds to respond to the Somalia crisis.

-- Ultimately, the humanitarian situation in Somalia can only be addressed with a lasting political and security sector solution, which we believe should be based on the Transitional Federal Charter.

-- Therefore, we continue to support the efforts by the Special Representative to the Secretary General for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Adballah, and the Somalia Prime Minister Nur "Adde" Hassan Hussein to reach out to the opposition. It is extremely important that this dialogue continue with the goal of moving towards national elections. Member states with ties to Somalia should press all parties to reject violence and embrace dialogue.

-- Likewise, we again call on the UN Secretariat to continue contingency planning, beyond those laid out in the SYG's March 14 report, for deployment of a UN PKO under less than ideal circumstances. These contingency plans should present options, based on the area of responsibility and mission mandate, for the Council's consideration. We understand the challenges in planning peacekeeping operations when security realities on the ground are so unstable and unpredictable, but the people of Somalia cannot wait for the "ideal" security situation for the UN to take a leadership role in the security of Somalia.

-- The United States commends AMISOM for its efforts to secure and stabilize Somalia even while extremist elements

in the country continue to target its forces. We would once again like to praise the bravery of the 1850 Ugandans and 850 Burundian peacekeepers currently stationed in Somalia. We urge all AU members who have made public commitments to the mission to fulfill their pledge and deploy as soon as possible. We urge all member states to provide financial resources, personnel, equipment, and logistical support so these forces and future troop pledges can deploy as soon as possible. The United States welcomes the idea of a high-level donors conference for AMISOM to be held in New York in the upcoming months as laid out by the Secretary General in his April 23 letter to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

-- The United States fully supports the relocation of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), as well as other essential members of the UN Country Team, from Kenya to Somalia as soon as possible. We agree with the recommendations of the SYG in his March 14 report that the UN Department of Safety and Security (DSS) start planning for the relocation of UNPOS and UN Country Team elements back to Somalia. The return of UNPOS and parts of the UN Country team can help alleviate the humanitarian situation in Somalia.

-- We support the idea outlined in the strategic assessment portion of the SYG's March 14 report that calls

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for the formulation of a joint planning unit that could coordinate an integrated strategy. However, we emphasize the need to maintain the neutrality of UN humanitarian operations in any enhanced coordination mechanism among UN programmatic activities.

-- We applaud the efforts of the UN and NGO communities to operate in very dangerous circumstances to provide assistance to the citizens of Somalia. We continue to be concerned that their efforts remain hampered by insecurity, roadblocks, and inter-clan conflict. We call on all parties to facilitate humanitarian access for the delivery of life-saving aid to those in need.

-- The United States believes the scourge of piracy off the Somalia coast is also hindering efforts to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Somalia. We continue to work with our colleagues in the Council on a resolution to combat Somalia piracy. We hope you will support this effort so we can pass this important resolution this month.

end points
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